

JACKSON ARLINGTON

SMALL AREA PLAN

As adopted by the
Saint Paul Planning Commission
8 November 1991



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

JACKSON ARLINGTON SMALL AREA PLAN

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I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this small area plan is to:

1. Analyze the current situation in the study area;
2. Assess the problems and opportunities for redevelopment; and
3. Identify necessary changes and development strategy steps.

Background

Concerns about the area were identified in the District Six Plan (1979) and 1981 Plan Amendment. The concerns include the low tax base from underutilized industrial land, the negative image to neighboring residential properties, and truck traffic along Arlington Avenue.

In 1987, the District Six Land Use Task Force determined that industrial development best met their goals for the area, and a study was deemed necessary. The District Six Planning Council requested that the Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED) conduct a study of the area. The study was funded and started in January 1989. PED selected Dahlgren, Shardlow, and Uban (planning), Maxfield Research Group (market research), and Braun Engineering (soils engineering) as the consulting team to conduct the study. The report identified the redevelopment potential of the area based on adjacent land uses, topography, soil conditions, and analysis of market opportunities. The final report identified a concept plan for the area which is used as a basis for this amendment to the City's comprehensive plan.

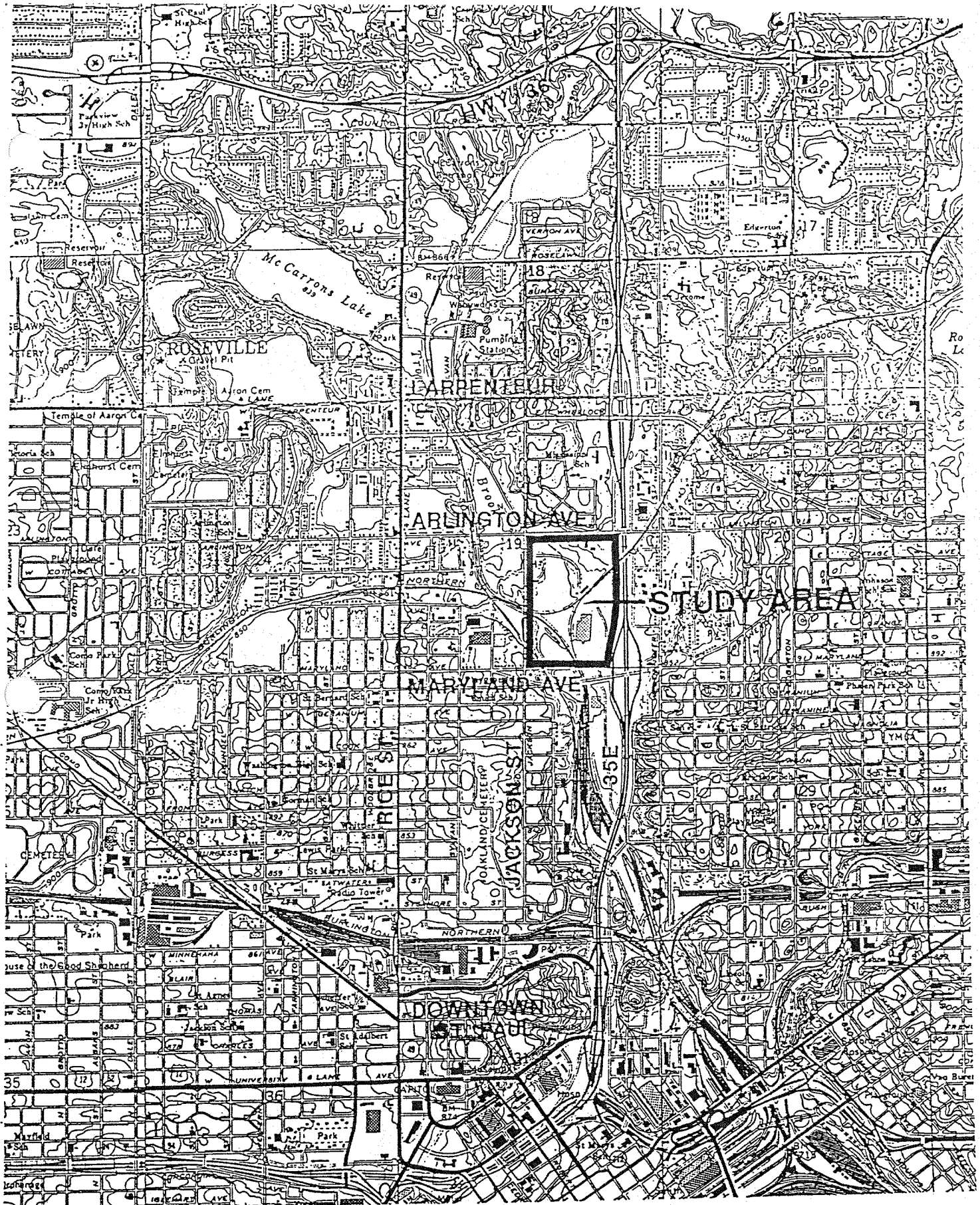
Location

The 95-acre study area, located two miles north of downtown Saint Paul, is illustrated on Figure 1, Regional Location. The site is bounded by I-35E on the east, Maryland Avenue on the south, Jackson Street on the west, and Arlington Avenue on the north. Landmarks near the study area include McDonough Homes and Mississippi School to the north and the Oakland Cemetery to the south.

Goals

The District Six Planning Council, with the input of area residents and property owners, formed a vision for the area. They determined that a plan for the area should:

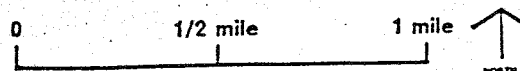
- 1) Increase employment.
- 2) Increase the tax base.
- 3) Improve the visual image.
- 4) Be compatible with existing plans and zoning.



REGIONAL LOCATION

FIGURE 1

ARLINGTON
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MARYLAND
35E STUDY



CITY OF ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

II. DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

Existing Land Use

The pattern of existing land use is shown in Figure 2. The predominant land use in the study area is industrial and primarily salvage yards (Wilson Auto Salvage, Bauer Brothers Building Salvage, Allstate Salvage, Brac's Auto Parts, Twin Cities Salvage). There is one large construction equipment business (Advance Shoring/Equipment) and a smaller construction office (Gilbert Construction) as well.

Commercial land use is also present in the study area, with a K-Mart store and a Savers thrift store. Also in area are a Wendy's restaurant and a vacant gas station.

There is also a substantial amount of vacant land in the study area, both publicly and privately held. The public land includes the 60 foot wide Saint Paul Water Utility owned right of way that crosses the study area from northwest to southeast, splitting into two branches at the north edge of the Advanced Shoring property. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) owns a portion of a 100 foot wide abandoned railroad corridor which crosses from northeast to southwest into the middle of the study area. This segment is the western end of a seven mile corridor which is being developed as a bike and pedestrian trail. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) owns the right of way for I-35E at the eastern edge of the study area, and the City of Saint Paul owns, or has permanent easement over, the widened Maryland Avenue right-of-way at the south edge of the study area. Both the Burlington Northern and Soo Line railroads have active rail lines and own right-of-way in the southern portion of the study area.

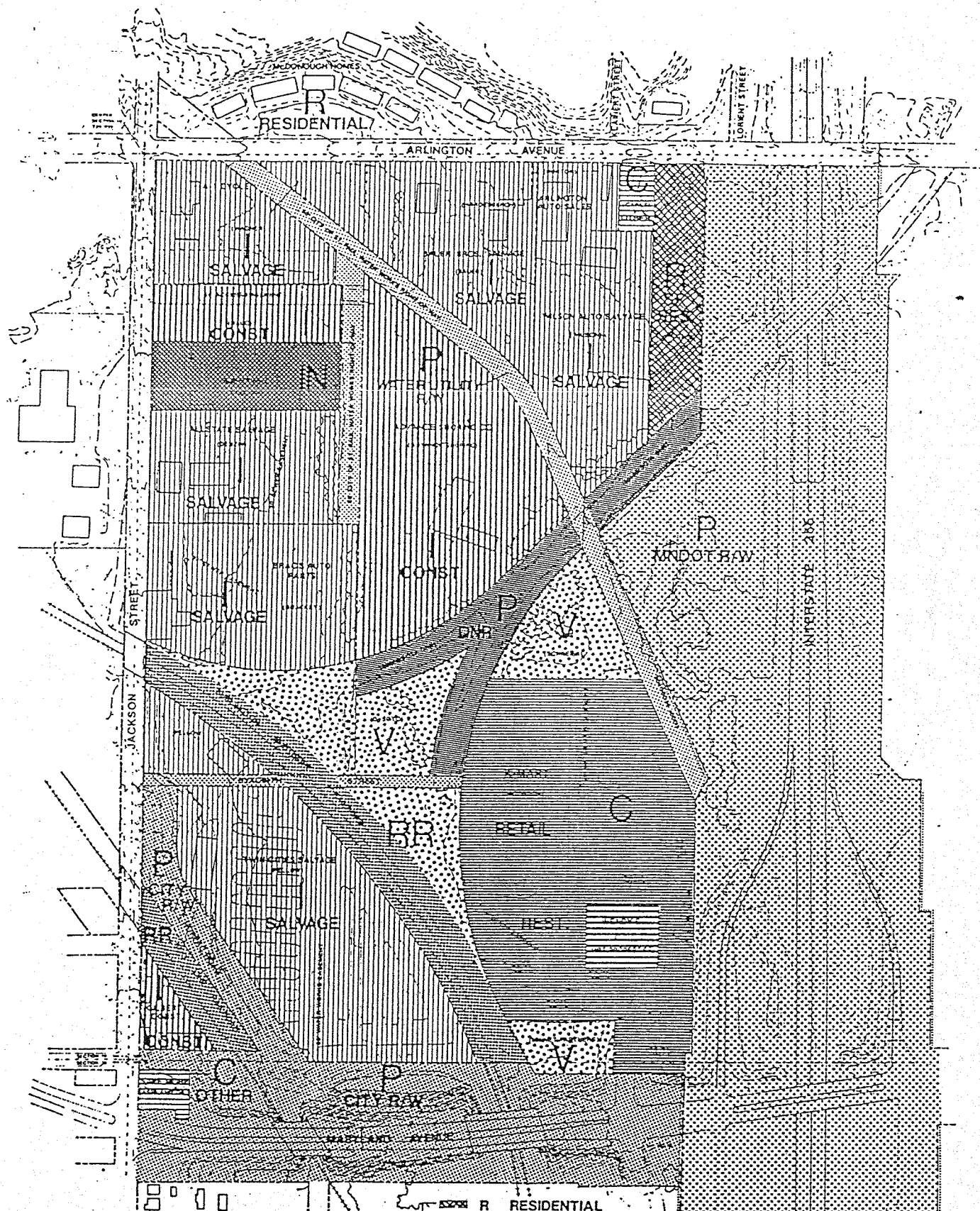
In addition to the above uses, which are consistent with the commercial/industrial character of the area, there are two land uses that are inconsistent with the general character of the area: the Norhaven Home for retarded women and the Balian homestead.

The adjoining land use to the north is McDonough Homes, a large public housing project. The land use to the west of the study area includes significant open space with scattered industrial uses.

Existing Zoning

Four zoning districts are represented in the study area: B-2, Community Business District; B-3, General Business District; and I-1 and I-2 industrial districts (see Figure 3, Existing Zoning).

K-Mart and Wendy's occupy most of the B-2 zoning district. The vacant gas station occupies the B-3 zoning district in the southwest corner of the study area and is consistent with it. Gilbert Construction, Brac's Auto Parts, and Twin Cities Salvage occupy most of the I-2 zoning district and are consistent with permitted and special condition uses within that district.



EXISTING LAND USE
FIGURE 2

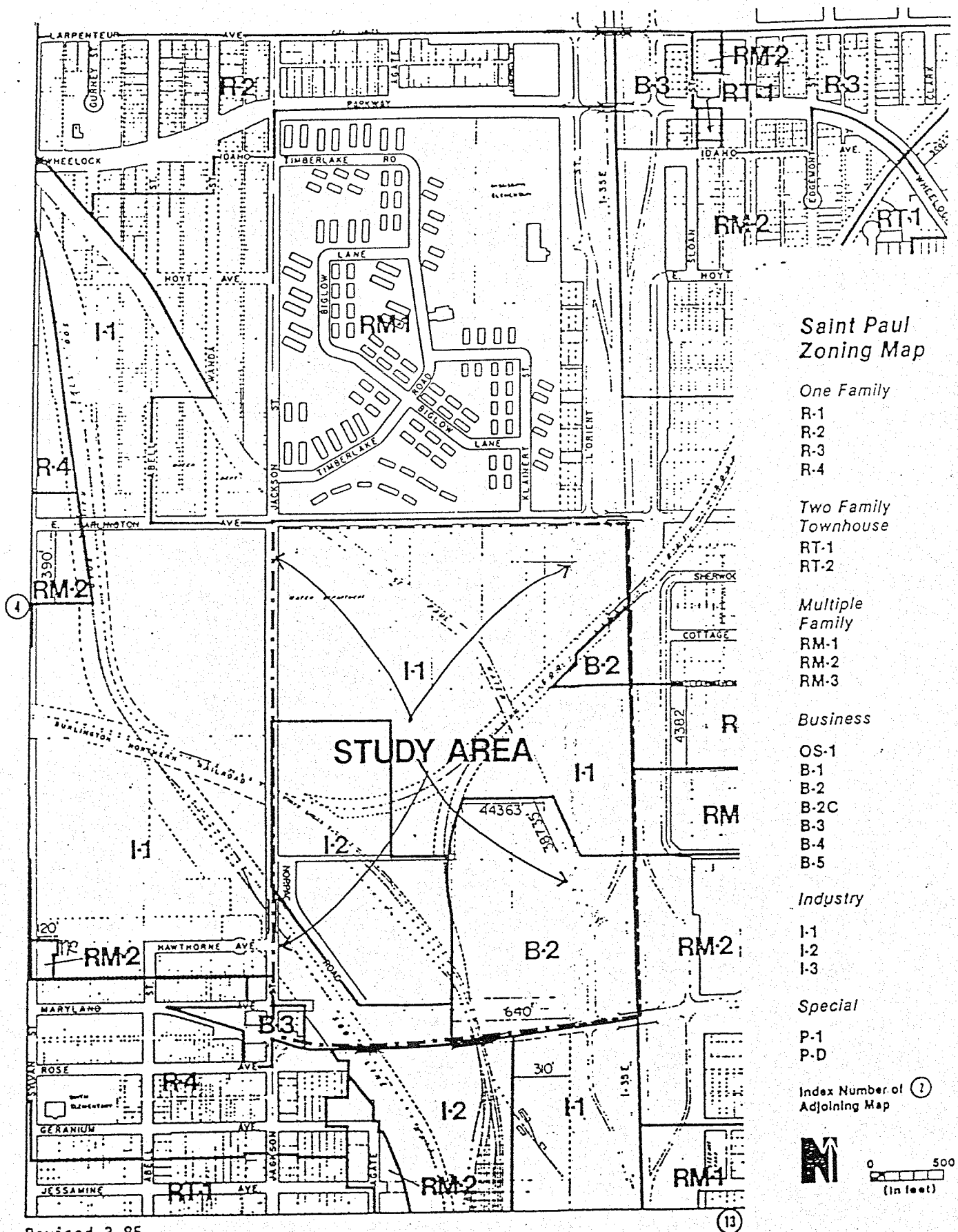
ARLINGTON
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MARYLAND
35E STUDY

PRIVATE		R RESIDENTIAL
		C COMMERCIAL
		I INDUSTRIAL
		IN INSTITUTIONAL
		RR RAILROAD
		V VACANT
PUBLIC		P PUBLIC
		CITY R/W
		DNR
		MnDOT R/W
		WATER UTILITY R/W

----- PROPERTY LINE
----- EASEMENT
----- RAILROAD
----- CONTROLLED ACCESS
BUSINESS NAME (OWNER)



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EXISTING ZONING

FIGURE 3

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MARYLAND
OFF STUDY

Adjoining zoning districts include a RM-1 district to the north and a I-1 district to the west. Land use in these areas is consistent with the zoning.

Based on the City's zoning code, there are a number of nonconforming uses in the study area. The Wendy's restaurant is a legal nonconforming use in a B-2 zoning district. Within the I-1 district, only Advance Shoring (construction equipment) and A-1 Cycle (retail auto parts) are permitted uses. The other salvage yards (Allstate, Bauer Brothers, Wilson) are special condition uses allowed in the I-2 District. The Balian homestead and the Norhaven facility do not violate the zoning code and are not nonconforming uses.

Comprehensive Plan

The District 6 Plan (as amended 9/10/81) designates the study area for industrial and business uses. That plan is illustrated on Figure 4, Comprehensive Plan. Among the major issues that are noted in the plan are the screening and buffering of the industrial areas, both along Jackson Street and Arlington Avenue.

Topography and Easements

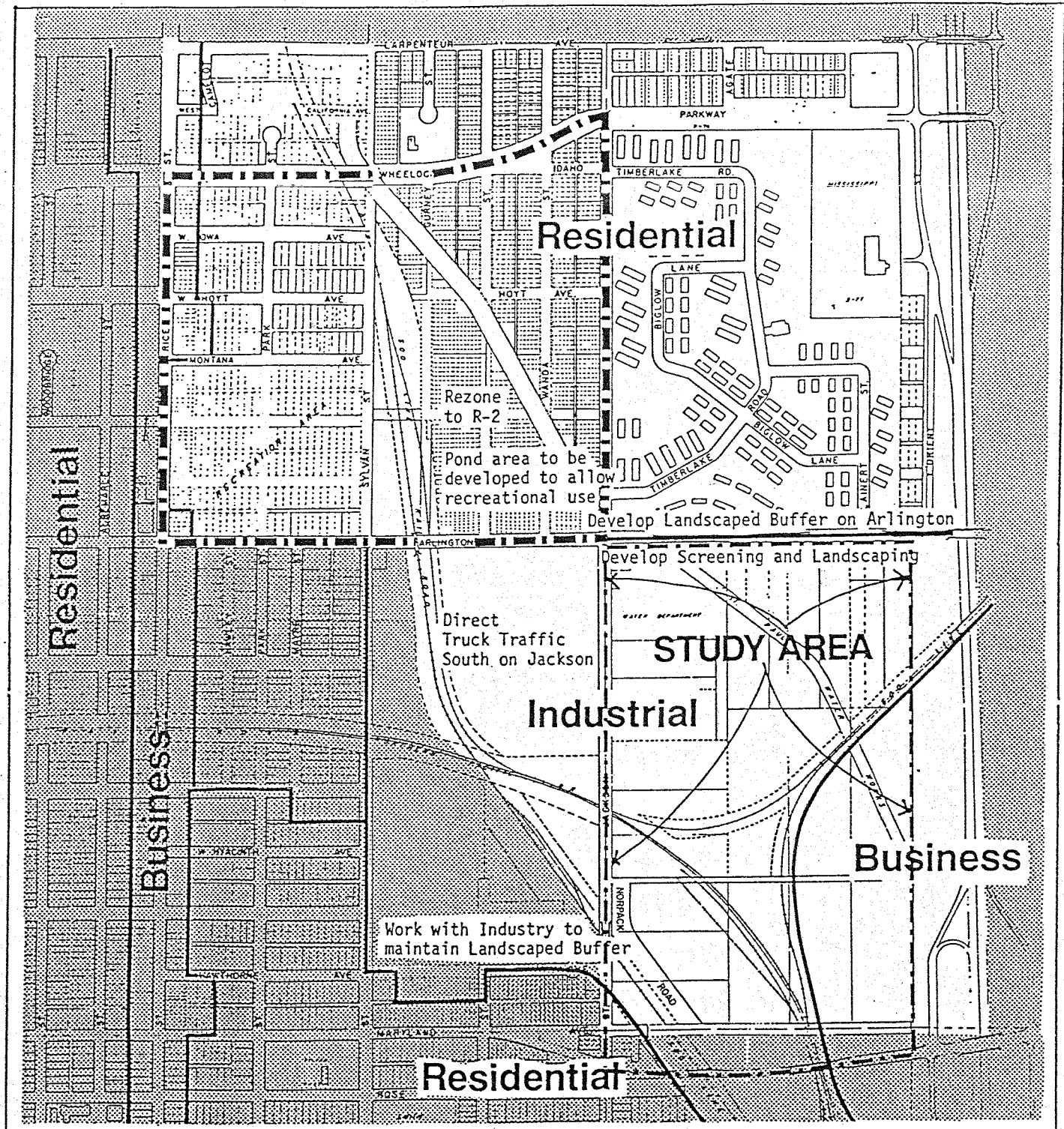
The existing land conditions are shown in Figure 5, Topography, and Figure 6, Slope Analysis. The steepest slopes in the study area are along I-35E, Maryland Avenue, and the southern segment of Jackson Street. The northern portion of Jackson Street and all of Arlington Avenue are in flat areas. The topography within the site makes access difficult and will need to be altered for redevelopment of the area.

Assets and Constraints for Redevelopment

The assets of the site are illustrated on Figure 7, Assets. Assets for development include the existing successful K-Mart and Savers stores, access to I-35E from both north and south, good visibility into the study area from three sides and particularly from I-35E, existing access easements which might be extended, and publicly-owned land that might be acquired and used for streets or additional development.

The constraints of the site are shown on Figure 8, Constraints. The most basic constraint of the study area is the soil conditions. The natural soil conditions in the majority of the study area are not suitable for normal construction. Deep foundations and other corrective work, such as excavation and backfilling, would be required for construction on the site. In addition, the potential for manmade soil contamination in the area could cause problems in cleanup and redevelopment.

The second constraint is the barrier to development posed by the railroads, the Water Utility right of way, and the DNR trail corridor. The railroads effectively isolate the land in the southwestern corner of the study area from the rest of the area and do not offer the kind of image many higher quality developments would want. The Water Utility and DNR parcels also divide the area.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

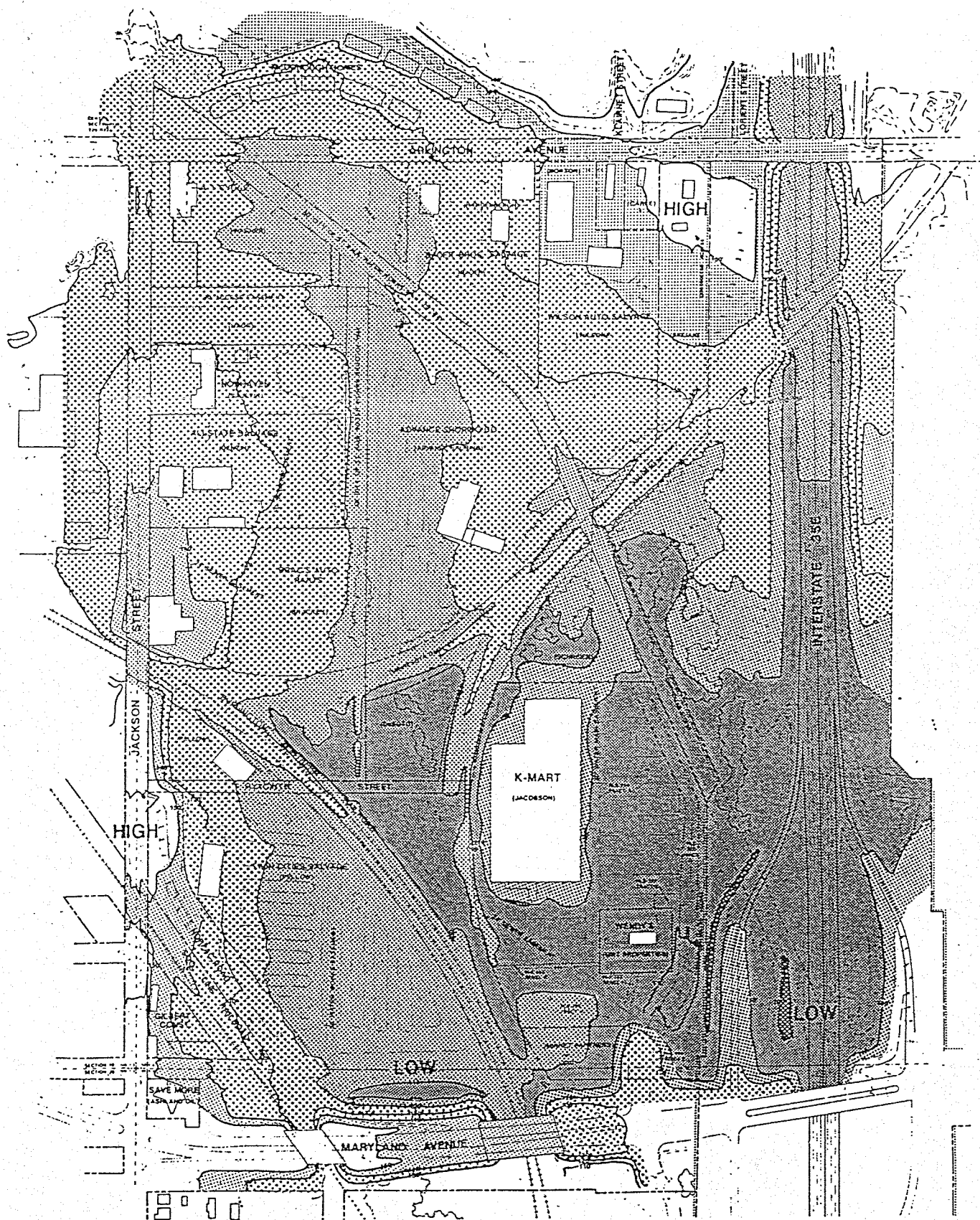
FIGURE 4

ARLINGTON

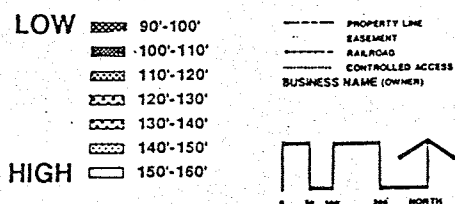
JACKSON

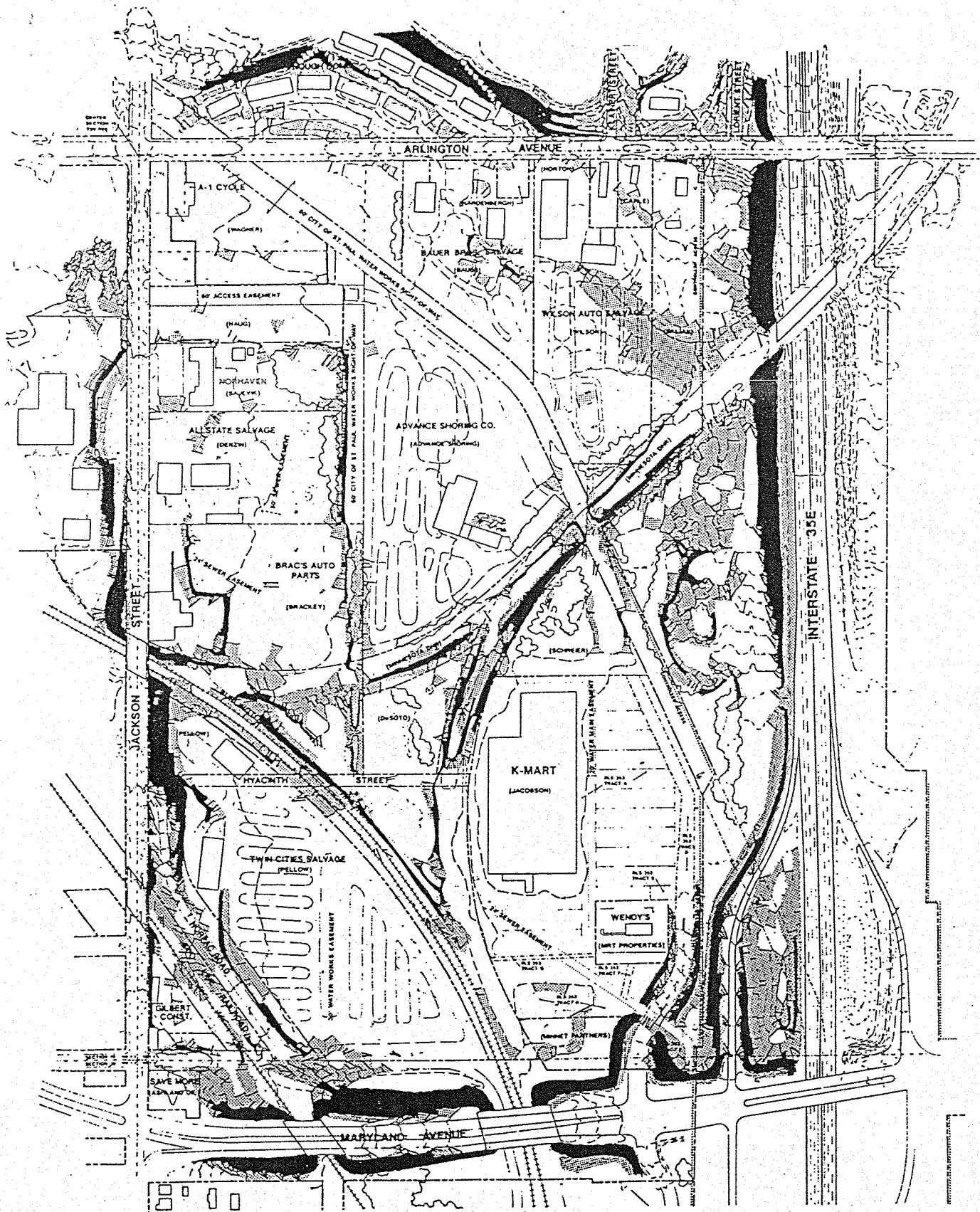
MARYLAND

35E STUDY



TOPOGRAPHY
FIGURE 5
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MARYLAND
35E STUDY





SLOPE ANALYSIS
FIGURE 6

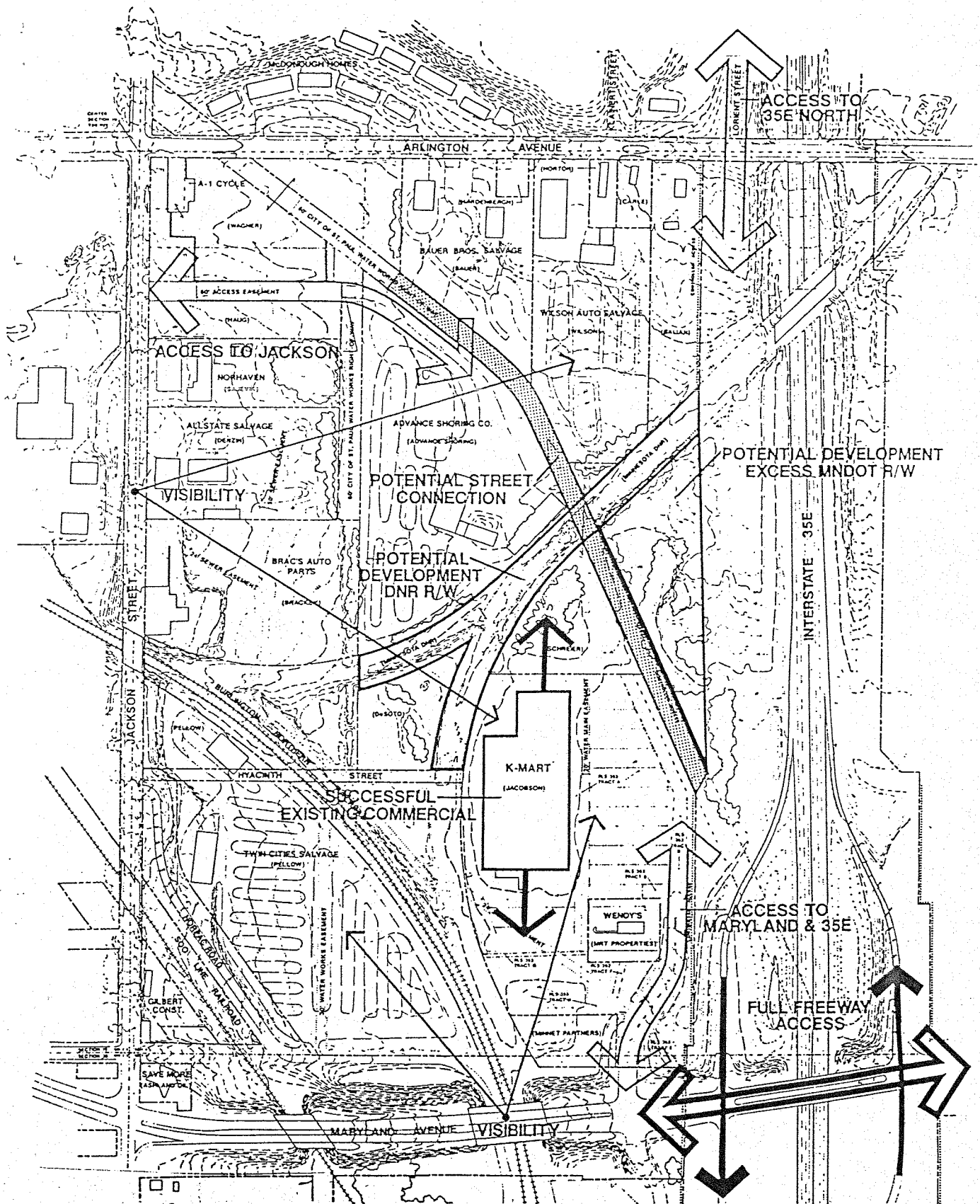
**ARLINGTON
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MARYLAND
35E STUDY**

— 18%+ SLOPE
- - - 6%-18% SLOPE
... 0-6% SLOPE

--- PROPERTY LINE
- - - EASEMENT
- - - RAILROAD
- - - CONTROLLED ACCESS
BUSINESS NAME (OWNER)

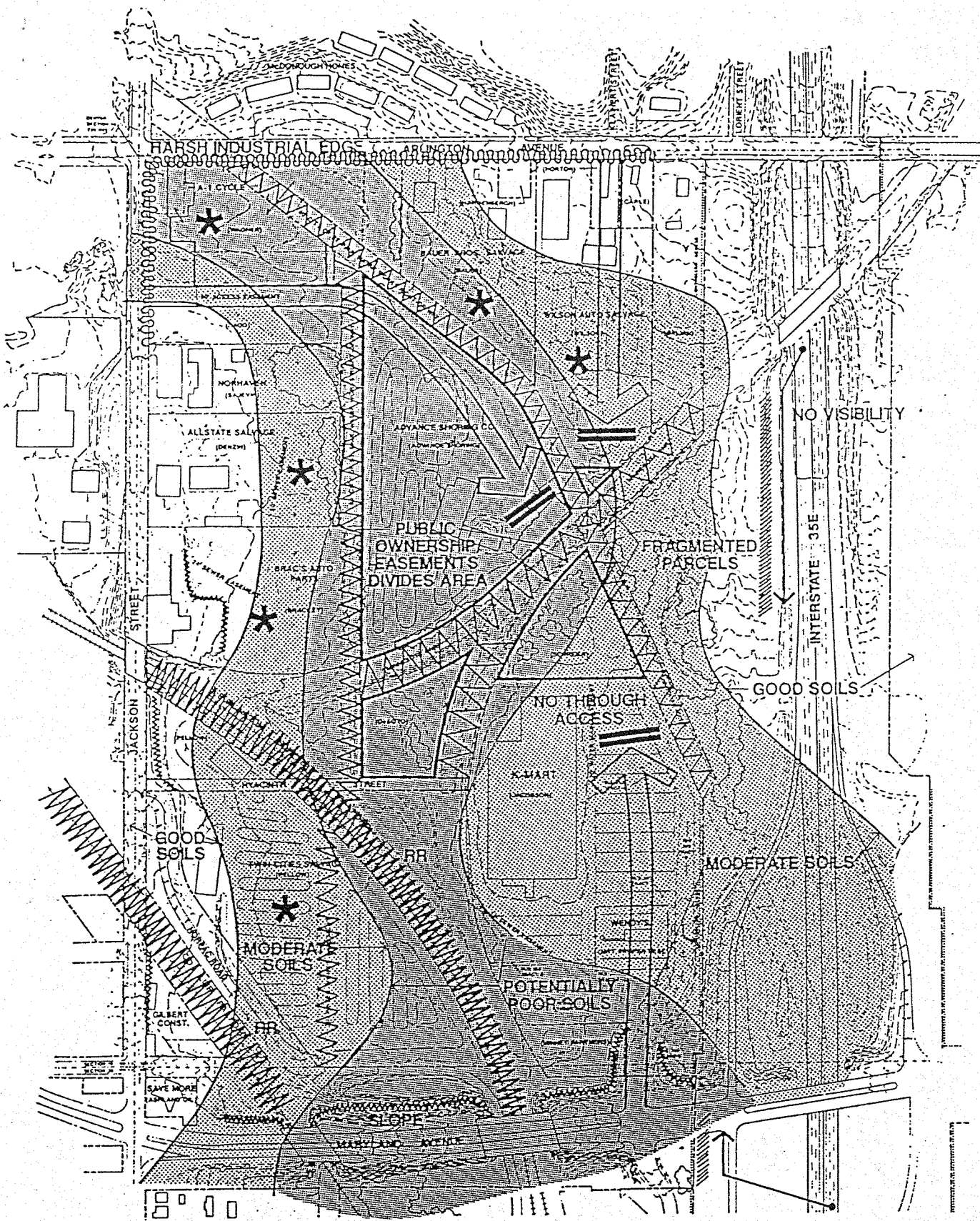


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ASSETS
FIGURE 7

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CONSTRAINTS
FIGURE 8

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35E STUDY

- PUBLIC OWNERSHIP/EASEMENTS
- RAILROAD
- SLOPES
- HARSH INDUSTRIAL EDGE
- NO THROUGH ACCESS
- FRAGMENTED PARCELS
- NO VISIBILITY
- POTENTIALLY POOR SOILS
- MODERATE SOILS
- GOOD SOILS
- POTENTIAL HAZARDOUS WASTES

- PROPERTY LINE
- EASEMENT
- RAILROAD
- CONTROLLED ACCESS
- BUSINESS NAME (OWNER)



CITY OF ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

A third constraint is posed by the lay of the land, i.e., the steep slopes along Maryland Avenue and much of Jackson Street. These areas do not provide easy access or large flat parcels for development.

The above factors combine to prevent the real key to successful commercial and industrial development: access (See Figure 9, Access). Currently, there are no public streets through the area. Without streets, large parcels of interior land in the study area will never develop beyond what they are today.

Market Overview

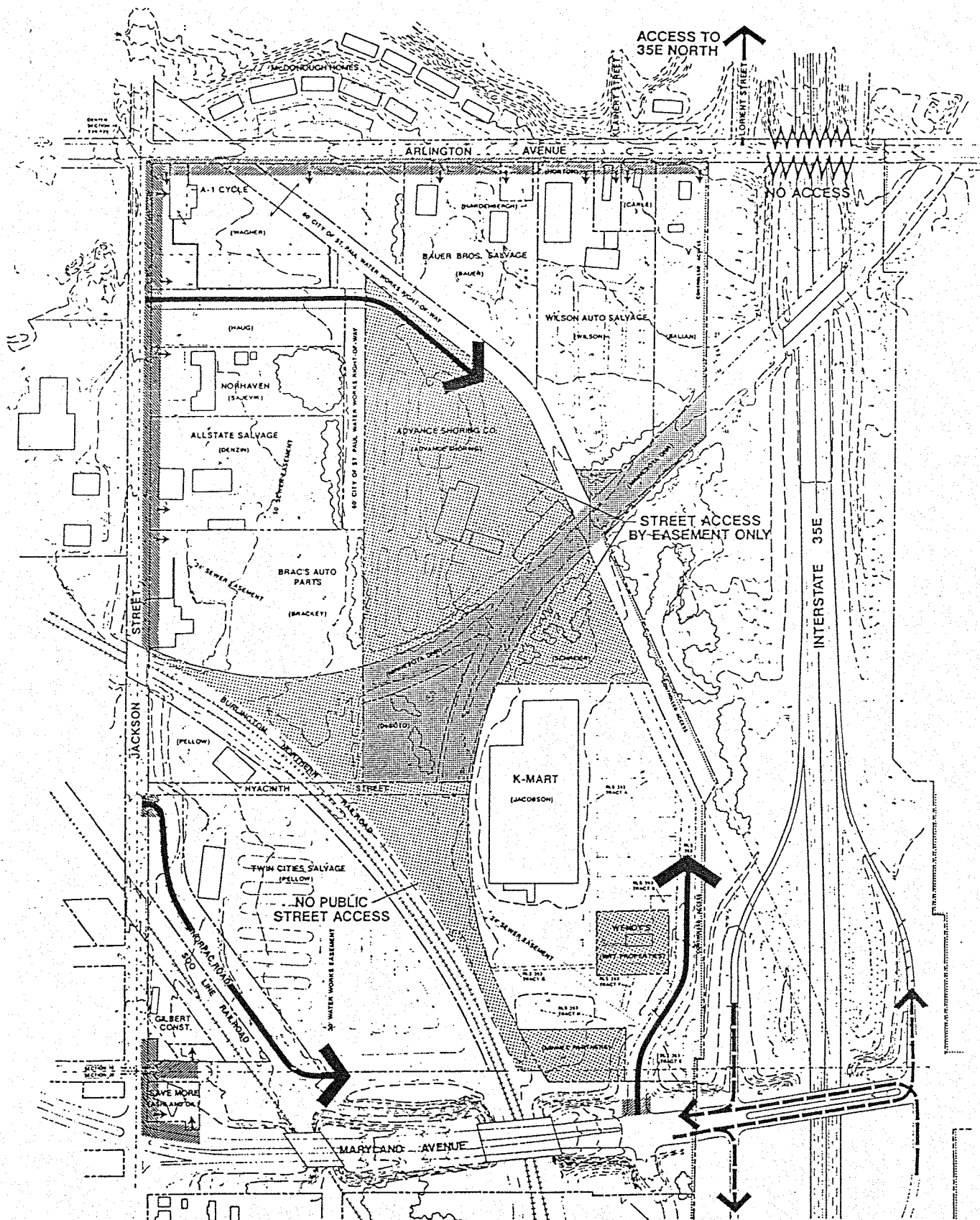
The conclusion of the Maxfield Research Group is that retail, office-showroom, office-warehouse, and light industrial uses are the most appropriate for the study area.

The research shows strong potential for office-warehouse and office-showroom space but little demand for additional retail development. Approximately 500,000 to 650,000 square feet of space could be absorbed in a period of ten years.

Office-warehouse and office-showroom are distinguished by their differing structural characteristics and attract a wide variety of tenant types. Office-warehouse buildings generally have less than 20 percent finished space, 18 to 20 foot clear ceiling heights and above-grade docks. They are generally more industrial in appearance and usually attract light manufacturing companies. Access and visibility are generally not as important to office-warehouse space as compared to office-showroom space. Office-showroom buildings have a higher proportion of finished space (30 to 50 percent), at-grade docks, 12 to 16 foot ceiling clear height, and better visibility than office-warehouse buildings.

Employment

Under the proposed redevelopment plan, employment in the area would increase greatly. Estimated current employment in the area is less than 200. Future employment at full development, based on 2.3 employees per 1,000 square feet of building area, would be about 1,500. These jobs would include a variety of professional, sales, service, manufacturing, and clerical positions.



ACCESS
FIGURE 9

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MARYLAND
35E STUDY

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Concept Plan

1. Redevelop the land according to the Concept Plan in Figure 10. The proposed redevelopment concept for the study area is a business park with light industrial and office-service uses.
2. Development should occur in four phases (See Figure 10). The concept plan divides the study area into four sub-areas which can be developed in four separate phases. Developing the plan in phases will allow the most attractive areas to be developed first and will increase the marketability of the later phases.

Land Use and Zoning

3. Designate the study area as a Redevelopment District. This designation will allow the City to exercise the right of condemnation and will enable the City to purchase the land necessary for redevelopment.
4. Rezone the I-2 area in the eastern part of the study area and the B-2 triangle in the northeastern corner of the study area to I-1. Rezoning to I-1 will make the redevelopment area uniform in zoning and is consistent with the proposed light industrial and office-service uses. Rezoning of these particular parcels cannot be done by a forty-acre study because, given the limited number of surrounding property owners, a consent petition would be practical. However, rezoning could be done as part of a larger zoning and land use study.
5. Rezone the B-2 area Wendy's now occupies to B-3. Currently the restaurant is a legal nonconforming use. Rezoning to B-3 would make the zoning conform to the use and allow possible future expansion of the building.

Soils

6. Complete further studies on both the natural characteristics (for building purposes) and the chemical characteristics (hazardous waste possibility) of soils in the study area. A study done by Braun Engineering indicates that the soils in the study area present two kinds of problems, both potentially severe. The first problem is the presence of poor soil and the second problem is the potential for manmade soil contamination in the study area. These two problems are the biggest obstacles to redevelopment in the area (See Figure 8, Constraints). More soil borings are needed to determine what soil problems exist and how extensive they are. Foundation and soil work can solve the poor soil condition problems, but at a cost. Hazardous waste testing, including groundwater testing, may also force the City to take on some liability for the cleanup. If the land is acquired by the HRA, funding sources for the cleanup will be necessary.

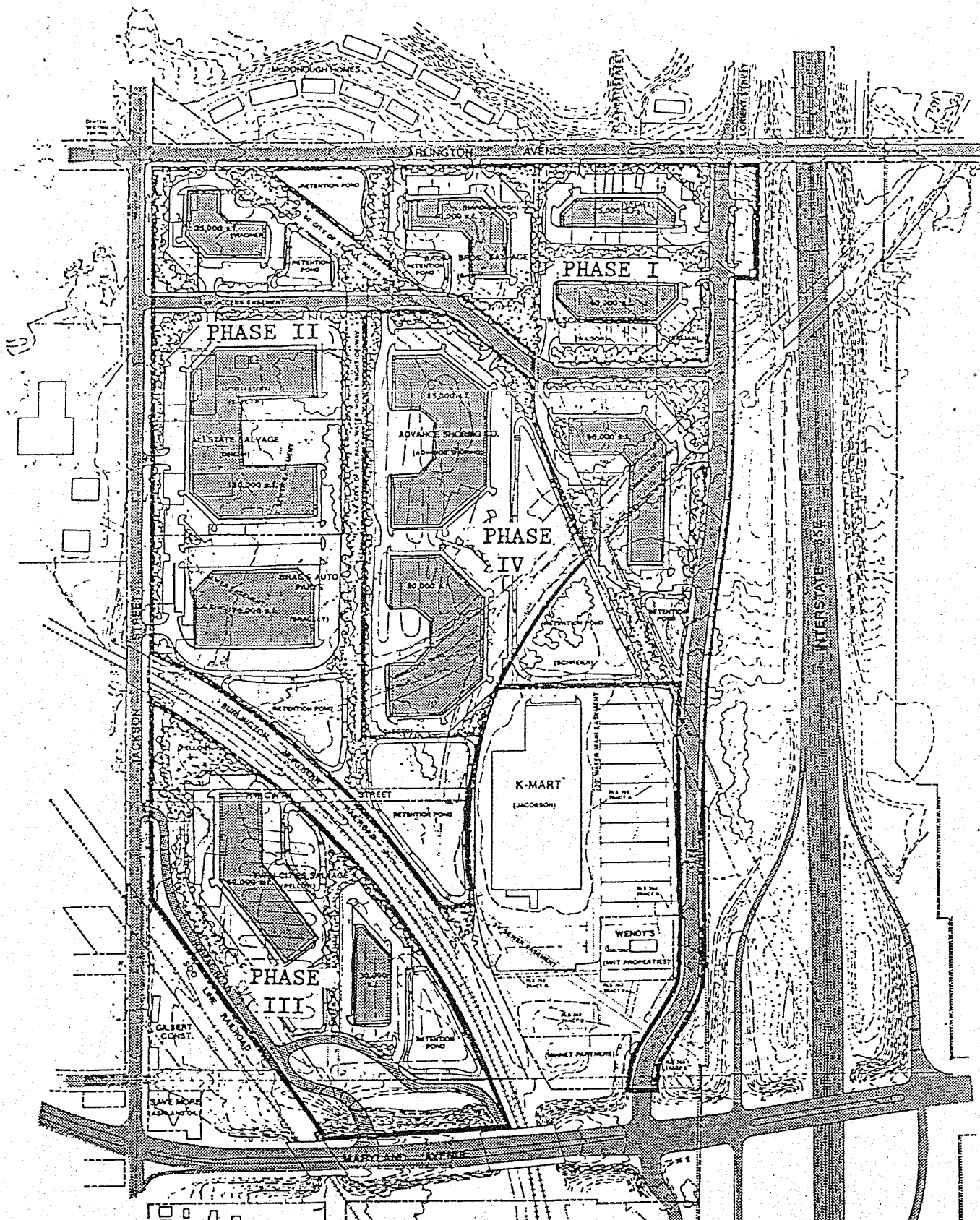
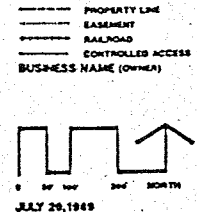


FIGURE 10

**CONCEPT PLAN
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MARYLAND
35E STUDY**

LAND USE SUMMARY

PHASE	BUILDING S.F.	GROSS AC.	STREET R.O.W.	RETENTION POND	ST. PAUL WATER R.O.W.	NET AC.
I	185,000 S.F.	26.4 AC.	5.8 AC.	2.8 AC.	1.2 AC.	17.0 AC.
II	235,000 S.F.	25.7 AC.	1.8 AC.	3.4 AC.	2.1 AC.	18.8 AC.
III	90,000 S.F.	11.0 AC.	7 AC.	1.5 AC.	-	8.8 AC.
IV	185,000 S.F.	12.4 AC.	-	1.5 AC.	1.8 AC.	11.3 AC.
	675,000 S.F.	76.5 AC.	7.9 AC.	9.0 AC.	3.9 AC.	65.7 AC.



Redevelopment Financing

7. PED staff should continue efforts to find new sources of funding and to revise TIF legislation to make redevelopment feasible. Existing Tax Increment Financing legislation makes it difficult to establish a TIF district. Until financing laws change or other sources of funding appear, it is not feasible to develop this site.

If there are problems with the soil in the area, the creation of a new type of environmental district separate from an economic development district could result in a viable source of funding for this area.

Environmental Review

8. Prepare an environmental assessment worksheet (EAW). The preparation of an EAW by the City of Saint Paul is required for any office/service project with over 600,000 square feet of building. The full development estimate for the Arlington - Jackson plan is 675,000 square feet. An EAW is a succinct statement of the affects a project would have on a variety of issues regulated by government agencies, such as traffic, air and water quality, land use, etc.

Street Systems and Utilities

9. Complete a traffic study for the area to analyze the possible affects of redevelopment. Vehicular access into the study area presents a contradiction: where regional access is best, local access is limited; where local access is best, regional access is limited. Some areas within the study area have no access at all.

The study area enjoys regional access at I-35E with a full interchange at Maryland Avenue. Local access is limited on Maryland Avenue and the south part of Jackson Street because of a large grade separation. The north part of Jackson Street and all of Arlington are roughly at the same grade level and therefore offer good local access (see Figure 9, Access).

Several parcels within the study area have limited or no access to the street system. Advance Shoring has access to Jackson Street through an easement across a private parcel. The property north of K-Mart only has access through a stubbed private road past K-Mart from Maryland Avenue. The DeSoto parcel and the DNR right-of-way appear to have no public street access at all.

The most important proposed access improvement is a new frontage road along I-35E connecting Maryland and Arlington Avenues. It would serve the entire development, which may raise concerns about the capacity of the intersection at Maryland. Traffic projections on the affects of redevelopment need to be made to accurately plan for the future of the area.

10. Complete the new local streets required for each phase of the development. Access to the site will increase demand for development.

3,300'
1,600' ← Maryland Avenue to Arlington Avenue, an east-west road connecting
← Jackson Street to the north-south frontage road, and completing the
existing Norpac Road in the southwest corner of the study area.
600' ←

11. Complete additional water and sewer lines as each phase of development proceeds.

12. Encourage the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to complete the Munger Trail from the east side of I-35E into downtown Saint Paul. The metro/gateway portion of the trail currently ends just east of I-35E across from the Jackson/Arlington site. The Munger Trail will ultimately connect downtown Saint Paul and the Capitol with Pine Point Park in Washington County and continue to Duluth. The exact route of the trail from its current terminus at I-35E to downtown and the Capitol is uncertain at this point; it is likely that it will pass through the Jackson/Arlington site. The trail should be accommodated in redevelopment of the site. It will provide an attractive amenity for the business park and an important regional recreation route.

Acquisition and Relocation

13. Acquire all land necessary for redevelopment in the study area. Either the Port Authority or the HRA should acquire all the land, public and private, necessary for redevelopment of the area. This will likely include all properties except those with K-Mart, Savers, and Wendy's in the southeast corner of the site and gas station and construction company in the southwest corner of the site.

Cost estimates of relocating the salvage yards need to be completed. Very rough preliminary estimates for relocation, done in 1989, run around two million dollars for the entire study area.

CREDITS

The Jackson/Arlington Small Area Plan is based on a redevelopment feasibility study commissioned by the City of Saint Paul and conducted by the consulting firm of Dahlgren Shardlow & Uban. The consultant worked with a task force comprised of the following people:

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